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ABSTRACT

This book examines the origin and development of doctoral degrees and offers recommendations for the improvement of doctoral programs and degrees. It discusses the birth of universities and doctoral degrees in medieval Europe and reviews the spread of the degree to the United States, Britain, Canada, and Australia. Contemporary concerns about doctoral degrees are explored through a multi-stage survey of 67 scholars from the United States, Canada, Britain, and Australia which identified 19 problems that doctoral programs face. Possible solutions are then discussed, with the conclusion that most solutions face significant resistance due to the inertia of current programs. Non-traditional doctoral programs and the administration of doctoral programs in general are also examined. The work concludes by offering seven specific recommendations to improve doctoral programs. These include accepting fewer students into doctoral programs, payment of salaries to doctoral students, elimination of the required oral defense of the thesis, and protection of the reciprocity of all doctoral degree programs. Seven appendixes provide the names of the first male and female Ph.D. graduates with thesis titles in the United States, Britain, Canada, and Australia, doctoral degree components and requirements in those countries, titles of works discussing gender discrimination, the names of the scholars who participated in the survey, doctoral degree problems identified by the survey, definitions of terms associated with doctoral research, and a sample advisor-advisee contract. Contains 216 references. (MDM)

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